

# Flight Jacket

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Marine Corps Air Station Miramar

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## Padres hit over Miramar fences

Lance Cpl. Matthew Sulser, avionics technician, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, watches San Diego Padres relief pitcher Trevor Hoffman autograph his baseball. Many Marines and family members gathered to see the players and listen Oct. 1, as Hoffman and other Padres players spoke of gratitude for Marines and the job they do. "It's a great feeling to come out here and give troops our support. Thank you for all that you do," said Hoffman during the event. Joining Hoffman were manager Bruce Bochy, pitcher Jason Middlebrook, pitcher David Lee, pitcher Chuck McElroy, catcher Rick Wilkins, infielder Dave Magadan, infielder Kevin Witt, outfielder Mike Colangelo and members of the club's community relations and military marketing departments.

Photo by Sgt. Carolyn S. Sittig



## Trautman picks up first star

By Sgt. W.A. Napper Jr.

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

Colonel George J. Trautman, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing assistant wing commander, was frocked Monday during a promotion ceremony at the Flying Leatherneck Museum.

Major Gen. Charles F. Bolden Jr., 3rd MAW commanding general, attended the ceremony, as did several other general officers.

"There will be many changes you will notice," Maj. Gen. Bolden said to Brig. Gen. Trautman. "Everyone will want to help you all the time. We could not have asked for a more talented individual."

Brigadier Gen. Trautman, a Pittsburgh native, graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a bachelor of science degree in Biology. After completing The Basic School, he entered flight training and was designated a Naval aviator in April 1976. His initial aircrew training was completed in 3rd MAW with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 267. He then transferred to 1st Marine Brigade for duty with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465 and HMH-165. After qualifying as a Weapons and Tactics Instructor, he completed two Marine Amphibious Unit

deployments to the Western Pacific and Southwest Asia.

Brigadier Gen. Trautman was then reassigned to 3rd MAW, to again serve with HMLA-267. He also served with the 11th and 17th MAUs as they began training for initial Western Pacific deployments from 1 Marine Expeditionary Force. From 1984 through 1987, he served as a WTI with Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron 1. Following that assignment Brig. Gen. Trautman attended the Naval Command and Staff College. After graduating, he served aboard USS Okinawa as the assistant operations officer.

From 1990 through 1993 he served as the

See **Trautman**, page 10



Major Gen. Charles F. Bolden Jr. gives newly promoted Brig. Gen. George J. Trautman his oath of office at the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum. Photo by Sgt. W.A. Napper Jr.

## MACG-38 holds Operational Advisory Group conference

By Sgt. W.A. Napper Jr.

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

Commanding officers with the Corps' Marine Air Control Group met at Marine Air Control Group 38 for an Operational Advisory Group conference last week.

The OAG provides a forum for discussing issues which directly affect the MACG community beyond the next five years, as well as provide a vehicle for identifying and prioritizing issues that directly impact the group's operational capabilities, standardization, training, readiness and safety.

According to Lt. Col. Kevin L. Bywaters, MACG-38 S-5 plans officer, the OAG dealt with three key issues – developing new technology systems, keeping old systems going and keeping up with training to use the new systems.

"This is something that's set several months in advance," he said. "The OAG is a balancing act of modernization versus sustainment."

The OAG allows the Group's top Marines a forum for open discussion of issues affecting the Group's ability to provide aviation command, control and communication personnel, equipment, facilities and training throughout the Future Year Defense Plan.

The OAG is run by an executive steering committee, working committees and work-

ing groups. The ESC is chaired by the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing commanding general, or an appointed representative. It also includes all of the Group's commanding officers. They review the priority issues submitted by various working committees and

**"The main issues tackled answer the question 'where do we want the Marine Corps to fight for money for our community.'"**

Lt. Col. Kevin L. Bywaters  
S-5 plans officer, MACG-38

then prioritize the top eight issues before submitting them to the Commander, Marine Forces Pacific, the Commander, Marine Forces Atlantic and the Commander, Marine Forces Reserve. The issues are then endorsed and sent further up the chain of command.

Working committees are comprised of commanding officers from each functional area within the Groups. Committee chairmen ensure appropriate subject matter experts are on hand to address issues such as personnel, equipment, training, readiness, safety and other areas. The chairmen are responsible to the ESC for categorizing and prioritizing their recommendations, as well as developing a list for consideration by the ESC in personnel, equipment and warfighting upgrade issues. Those three categories are given a rating of critical, important or routine.

Working groups focus their attention on specific issues pertaining to personnel,

See **OAG**, page 10





## Leading by example

Major Gen. William G. Bowdon, commander, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area, fills out his form for the Combined Federal Campaign. The campaign kicked off Sept. 24 and ends Dec. 14. Photo by Sgt. W.A. Napper Jr.

# FSSA helps lift military members out of poverty

By Sgt. Mike Camacho

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

In the past, some Marines and their families have had to collect food stamps in order to make ends meet. May 1, the Department of Defense authorized the payment of the Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance to eligible members of the armed forces who would normally be entitled to food stamps.

Eligibility of the allowance is based on a member's household size and income. If a member's income, together with the income of the rest of that service member's household, is within 130 percent of the poverty line as defined by the Department of Agriculture, that member is entitled to FSSA up to a maximum payment of \$500 per month.

Because the value of government quarters is used in the computation of FSSA eli-

gibility and not in food stamp eligibility, some members will receive FSSA and still be eligible for food stamps.

The FSSA program is voluntary. Members must apply at their personnel office and receive certification in order to receive the FSSA payment.

Marines are urged to keep in mind that the FSSA income may affect the family's participation in other programs for which eligibility is based on income, such as subsidized school lunch programs, the Women, Infant and Children program, day care programs and earned income tax credit.

This entitlement is somewhat complicated. All entitlements are computed into the amount of income. This includes all allowances and bonuses.

Service members who think they may qualify for this allowance should visit their unit's administration offices for further assistance.

## Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance

Household Size	California
1	\$905
2	\$1,219
3	\$1,533
4	\$1,848
5	\$2,162
6	\$2,476
7	\$2,790
8	\$3,104
Each Add. Mbr.	\$315

◆ If a service member's total household income is less than the amount shown they may be qualified for the FSSA.

◆ All detailed information on the FSSA is available on "Marine Online," [www.mol.usmc.mil](http://www.mol.usmc.mil).

# 'Green Dragon' premieres at San Diego Asian Film Festival, shows Corps' human side

By Sgt. W.A. Napper Jr.

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

"Green Dragon," by Tim and Tony Bui, premiered at the 2nd Annual San Diego Asian Film Festival, which was held at the Mann Hazard 7 Theater in Mission Valley, Sept. 30.

The film was shot entirely at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, using the very Quonset huts which housed more than 50,000 Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s. Based on the life experiences of the director and producer, Tim said the movie was a tribute to his mother.

"My mother feared the moonlight because it brought her pain and sorrow," he said. "The moonlight reminded her too much of her homeland. I wanted to understand that sorrow and that's the reason I made this film."

Set in 1975, "Green Dragon" focuses on two young children, a brother and sister, who search the camp daily for their mother. They are cared for by their Uncle Tai Tran, played by Don Duong, who assists Patrick Swayze's character, the camp manager. The movie also allows the audience a glimpse of the hopes and fears of other members of the camp.

One man wishes to own a Cadillac, another wishes to start a community called Little Saigon. Many others dread the night, fearing they will be snatched away in their sleep.

Living in Quonset huts, the refugees must learn to cope with the pain and the world they now know.

Swayze plays the role of a Marine gunnery sergeant who is in charge of the refugee camp. He greets them with a bullhorn as they disembark a military bus. He treats

them equally, but with a lack of emotion that makes many refugees feel unwanted. He befriends Tran and soon realizes that if he shows the refugees that he cares about their well being, they won't be so afraid.

Forest Whitaker plays a civilian volunteer who cooks for the refugees. He befriends a small boy, who has put himself in an anti-social shell, and draws him out through the use of sketches and paintings.

Using the actual Quonset huts added to the realism of the film.

"We personally went through the camps ourselves," said Tim. "The military was really helpful to give us the tents (for the filming) and anything else we needed."

Although the Bui family went through a refugee camp at Fort Chaffee, Ark., Tim said there were several bases throughout the country helping Vietnamese refugees. The site at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton was by far the largest and stayed open the longest.

"I didn't understand the hardship around me (growing up in the camp)," he said. "Not a lot of people knew the camp was here. The Marines really helped us settle here."

Captain Shawn Haney, a Marine Corps motion picture and TV liaison at Los Angeles, said the Corps was glad to help the two brothers make the movie.

"The Marine Corps supported the film whole heartedly," she said at the movie's premier. "It shows there's a human side to the Marine Corps as well."

Filming began May 2000 and was shot in 26 days with only a \$1 million budget. The film was the closing feature for the festival and was shown in two theaters to a sold-out crowd. It played at the Sundance Film Festival and is scheduled for release Feb. 22, 2002.

# Downtown USO offers free meals to active-duty service members

By Cpl. Scott Whittington

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

San Diego's downtown United Service Organizations volunteers provide a free dinner to active-duty service members every Tuesday and has done this since it opens its doors in December 1941.

"We're a home away home for people who are 10,000 or 10 miles away for their home," said Jennifer S. Stander, director of public affairs, USO San Diego.

The USO offers entertainment such as magicians who perform for dining audience some Tuesdays. If there isn't live entertainment available, they play Bingo instead.

"It's a great place to spend time with family and use the free facility," said Carrie Buckalew, Navy wife. "We just had a baby and it makes us watch our budget more closely."

The USO provides the meals and they are prepared and served by vari-

ous organizations in the San Diego area.

The USO is funded by and operates with donations. San Diego has the two largest facilities in the world with one in downtown and at the airport. The downtown facility is 18,000 square feet and at Lindbergh Field 6,520 square feet. There are 123 USO facilities in the U.S. and each one is supported locally.

For more information about the USO, contact Jennifer Stander, director of public affairs at the downtown facility, at (619) 235-6503.



The downtown USO has offered a Tuesday night dinner to active-duty service members since 1941. Courtesy photo

# OPSEC

Your life may  
depend on it



# Marines, Sailors have things to do when bored

By Sgt. W.A. Napper Jr.

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

Marines and Sailors here have a plethora of options when choosing what to do with their off-duty time.

One of those options is a familiar name to most Miramar servicemembers, but many have no idea what it's really all about.

It's called the Single Marine Program, and according to Heather Fratangelo, SMP coordinator, it's here to get Marines and Sailors out and about.

"We support the overall quality of life for the Marines and Sailors here," she said. "We provide recreational activities to help them get out of the barracks or their house, and interact with other people."

The program, which is headquartered in the Great Escape, gets Marines and Sailors together for various activities like paint ball, trips to amusement parks, sporting events and other activities that get them around other people.

In order to plan what activities the SMP will provide for its many single participants, representatives from each unit aboard the Air Station meet bimonthly to decide what their Marines want to do for fun.

Frantangelo said anyone can attend the meetings and make recommendations for the program.

"The more feedback we get the better we can provide fun activities for the Marines and Sailors," she said. "They also need to know that the activities may be with other Marines, but it's a social environment and not anything like work."

One example of the program molding to Marines' desires is the idea to start a weekly

run club. On Tuesdays they run together for fun – usually through San Diego.

"They really like the idea of running for fun," she said. "It also works as a great stress relief for them."

Although she began heading the program here May 1, Fratangelo has been involved in bringing fun to the military for five years overseas. She worked with the Single Sailor Program and the Fleet Recreation Program at Naval Air Station Sigonella, Sicily.

"After spending so much time with Sailors, I was really excited to get the opportunity to be here and play with the Marines," she said.

Fratangelo said the biggest difficulty of her job is many Marines don't fully understand what the program is all about. One such misconception is the program is only for single Marines. She said married Marines and their spouses are more than welcome to participate in the program's activities. However, there is a rule about children – none are allowed below the age of 18.

"A lot of people seem to think we're against alcohol too," she said. "Sometimes there is drinking (at SMP functions) but we ensure everyone drinks responsibly. We definitely take care of each other – especially when it comes to that."

Fratangelo said her goal is to see that Marines and Sailors here have fun.

"That's my job – I get paid to have fun," she said. "If we're not having fun, then something's wrong, because this program is designed specifically for us to have fun. I get paid to play."

For more information about the Single Marine Program, contact Fratangelo at 577-6283.

## Marine Corps Exchange offers rewards to Super Star Students



The Marine Corps Exchange has recently implemented a program designed to reward "B" average students. The "Super Star Student" program rewards exceptional students with a scratch-off card that determines the prize. Photo by Sgt. Mike Camacho

By Sgt. Mike Camacho

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

The newly-formed Marine Corps Community Services' Marine Corps Exchange implemented a Marine Corps wide program designed to reward students in grades six through 12, Sept. 6.

The "Super Star Student" program allows the exchange to give scratch-off tickets to students who maintain at least a "B" average on their report cards. The average is based upon what is considered a "B" average by the school.

"It gives us a chance to recognize students who keep their heads to the grindstone and crank out those good grades," said Porter Smith, exchange customer relations and employee development specialist.

When a student brings in their report card, the exchange verifies the average and reward

the student with a scratch-off ticket. Tickets will identify what prize the student has won.

Prizes include discounts on merchandise such as disposable cameras, compact discs and backpacks. Each exchange will receive two \$1,000 savings bonds to be included on the list of prizes.

Every student who brings his or her "B" average report cards into the exchange will win a prize.

Gunnery Sgt. Laura Brown, military pay auditor, said this is an impressive program that she thinks will give her 11th grade daughter a good incentive to keep the grades up.

"I don't think teens always think too highly of education, but something like this is a great program that will gratify the students' hard work," said Brown.

For more information or to inquire about the "Super Star Student" program call Porter Smith at 695-6350.



## What's the magic word?

Staff Sergeant Iris Hedrick, recreation aid for the Outdoor Adventure Center, suited in bunny fashion, stands in the middle of the intersection at Bauer and Gonsalves directing passersby to a car

wash sponsored by the Single Marine Program Thursday. The Single Marine Program organized the car wash to raise money for the Red Cross' 911 Relief Fund. Photo by Cpl. Kristopher S. Haloj

Ad Space



# 21-gun salute fired by cannons, not rifles

By Duffie Clemons

*Letter to the editor*

**R**e: Flight Jacket, Sept. 28, 2001, page 7, caption: "Seven retired soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division, San Diego chapter give a 21-gun salute to honor those killed in the Pentagon attack."

It is a common error, even in the military, to confuse a 21-gun salute with three rifle volleys. Most recently, "The Scout" at Camp Pendleton and the "San Diego Union-Tribune" (twice) made this mistake. Both published my correction, which follows:

Your otherwise excellent article made a common mistake in referring to a 21-gun salute at the Veterans Memorial Center Memorial Service for San Diego veterans deceased in the past month.

A 21-gun salute is fired by guns, usually howitzers — not rifles. For example, Army cannoneers gave President George W. Bush a 21-gun salute at his inauguration. The number of guns officials are entitled to is specified: the president or head of state of a nation receiving 21, the U.S. vice president receiving 19, four-star flag officers (admirals/generals) receiving 17, down to 11 for one star

officers. The cannon salute consists of firing a prescribed number of rounds at three-second intervals on Memorial Day and Independence Day, to above dignitaries and between warships, between sunrise and sunset.

On the other hand, the traditional funeral ceremony includes a firing party — usually seven riflemen — who fires three volleys, thus the erroneous reference to a "21-gun salute." Military historians have traced this custom to the 17th century. Beyond that, the Romans honored their dead warriors by casting earth three times upon the grave, calling the name of the dead and saying "Vale" (farewell) three times.

Thank you for your interest.

One other point: These monthly memorial services are scheduled at 11:15 a.m. on the 4th Saturday of the month (not last Saturday). Everyone is welcome to attend and honor your fallen comrades.

Semper Fi,  
Duffie Clemons, CWO-4 USMC (Ret)  
President, San Diego Chapter 3  
Pearl Harbor Survivors Association

## Stomping out global terrorism

*Submitted by Cpl. Mark P. Ledesma*



## Local citizen pays respect to Miramar Marines

By Renee Sutanto

*Letter to the editor*

**T**o all of my heroes at Miramar and our forces around the world:

I do not know if you even have the time right now to check or read your e-mail, but I wanted to tell you just how very proud I am of you all.

I live in Santee and your helicopters fly over many times a day, as they have for quite a while. I have never been bothered by the sound of your flights as I have always known that it is the sound of freedom that I hear. Now, with the crisis at hand, the sound of your helicopters means even more to me. When I hear the helicopters flying over now, I race outside to watch them fly overhead.

Even though I am sure no one can see me from the helicopters, I always wave and say a prayer for the brave soldiers who are flying them.

Be brave, strong and proud, being Marines, I know you are. Thank you for all that you are doing for us.

God bless and keep you safe,  
Renee Sutanto  
Santee

### NOW TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Do you have something to say? Do you have a strong opinion? Would you like to see your byline in the Flight Jacket? The newspaper staff encourages readers to submit commentaries, letters to the editor or other articles or photographs. Story submissions can be sent by mail to: FJ Editor, H&HS PAO PO Box 452013, San Diego, CA 92145; by fax to 577-6001 ATTN: FJ Editor; or by e-mail [ombpaoflight@miramar.usmc.mil](mailto:ombpaoflight@miramar.usmc.mil).

Ad Space

## Mir Remarks

What does Columbus Day mean to you?



"A day off."

Staff Sgt. Kirk D. Langston  
VMFA-323  
maintenance administration SNCOIC



"I haven't really thought about it much. Most people today don't really take much time to think about it."

Rick C. Hansford  
Public Works Department  
engineering technician



"It reminds me of when Columbus landed in North America. It was an amazing feat for Columbus to defy current day mariners about the earth being flat and took a chance on his belief that the earth was round."

John McIsaac  
Retired  
USMC

# Navy League selects winners, runners-up for Naval Services Enlisted Women of the Year

By Sgt. W.A. Napper Jr.

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

Fifty-three women and their guests gathered at the Island Club aboard Naval Air Station North Island for the 40th annual Naval Services Enlisted Women of the Year, hosted by the San Diego Council of the United States Navy League.

The event was held in honor of all women from the Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard in the Southern California area. The nominated women were placed into one of two categories – E-4 to E-6 or E-7 to E-9 – and in order to be considered, nominees had to write an essay titled “What Military Service Means To Me.”

“Two things that were very much in common with all of these women were their dedication to Corps Values and the fact that they feel like they’re part of a family,” said Chuck Burnett, San Diego Council chairman.

Several Marines from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar were nominated for the award, including Gunnery Sgt. Laura L. Brown, pay auditor for Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron finance.

Brown enlisted in the Marine Corps in July 1984 in her hometown of San Antonio, Texas. She said although she enjoyed the ceremony, she hadn’t expected to be nominated.

“It surprised me,” she said. “When you’re a leader of Marines you don’t expect to get things in return. It makes you feel good that someone is noticing (your efforts) but it’s not why we do the things we do.”

After an anxious dinner of chicken cor-

don bleu, nominees were introduced one by one, before the two winners and two runners-up were announced. Mar Vista High School principal Louise Phipps read the four finalist’s essays before the crowd, and soon afterward, tension gripped the crowd as they waited the announcement.

In a first for the event, Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Sec S. Liu was chosen as the first runner up in the E-4 to E-6 category. Burnett said that for the previous 40 years no woman from the Coast Guard had ever placed. The winner for the category was Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Cheri L. Littrell.

In the E-7 to E-9 category, Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Beverly Y. Leedom, Southwest Naval Dental Center dental technician, took runner up, and Master Sgt. Mariana K. Robles, finance chief, from Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, took first place. In the last 15 years only four other female Marines have won the award, all since 1997.

“I can see the Marines brought a cheering section,” said Burnett.

Each winner received the key to National City from George Waters, National City mayor, as well as a scholarship to National University.

The idea for the Naval Services Enlisted Women of the Year Award began in 1958 when George Buell, National City department store manager, conceptualized an opportunity to salute the Navy and help the city to show its appreciation to Sailors. Three years later, the Navy League initiated the award ceremony.



Master Sgt. Marlana K. Robles, first-place winner E-7 to E-9, Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Beverly Y. Leedom, runner up E-7 to E-9, Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Cheri L. Littrell, first-place winner E-4 to E-6, and Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class Sec S. Liu, E-4 to E-6 runner up, stand together during the 40th Annual Naval Services Enlisted Women of the Year ceremony. Photo by Sgt. W.A. Napper Jr.

## Unit legal sections urge Marines to set up powers of attorney

By Sgt. Mike Camacho

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

While serving in the sea services it’s quite possible that there may come a time when a service member will need a power of attorney. If a Marine deploys, for example, it may become difficult for the individual left behind to conduct most financial and personal business matters.

Leaving a spouse behind with financial responsibilities and children can be difficult if the spouse doesn’t have a power of attorney to manage the assets.

“I would caution a Marine interested in making a power of attorney to ensure the person, who will be left all responsibilities, is trustworthy,” said 1st Lt. Chantell M. Fernandez, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron’s legal officer.

According to Fernandez, there are several different types of powers of attorney. A general power of attorney grants the selectee all power over all business matters of the grantor.

This includes cars, homes, children and the purchasing or selling of assets in the granting party’s name.

A special power of attorney spells out specific ways it can be used. Fernandez said, a special power of attorney is better, because it prevents the power of attorney from being used for any other purposes than intended.

Marines can use powers of attorney in a

number of different ways. Commonly, they are used when changing duty stations. Some will leave their spouse behind to sell cars, homes, move out of government quarters and a multitude of other management decisions.

When deploying, a single parent may need to grant an in loco parentis power of attorney empowering the caregiver with the custody of children. Caregivers may need this type of power of attorney to enroll a child in school or any other activities, Fernandez said. Caregivers would particularly need a power of attorney to authorize medical treatment if the child needs it, she said.

Powers of attorney are granted for however long the issuing party wishes to grant it. The power of attorney will expire on the date requested.

However, if a Marine needed to terminate the power of attorney at any time he has two ways to do so.

The first and easier method to terminate the power of attorney would be to destroy the original document, said Fernandez.

The second is to write a letter of revocation, have it notarized, then send it to the person holding the power of attorney. She also recommends, sending a copy of the revocation to places where the person is likely to use it.

Marines are urged by the Station legal assistance office to contact their unit legal officer or adjutant for more information on powers of attorney.

Ad Space



# Station veterinarian keeps dogs, cats in ‘check’



Duke, a nine-month-old red-nosed pit bull gets his toenails clipped at the vet clinic during a routine visit. Photo by Cpl. Mark P. Ledesma

By Cpl. Rob Henderson

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

To many service members, a family pet is as much a part of the family as any human member. Pets, like humans, need routine check-ups, immunizations and medical care.

**Army Sgt. Willie B. Sifford, senior animal technician, SDCVC, checks Duke's skin for any abnormalities. Sifford is responsible for keeping all of Miramar's military working dogs in good health. He also performs routine procedures for house pets like Duke. Photo by Cpl. Mark P. Ledesma**



The Station's veterinary clinic offers discounted health care services for domestic pets of Marines and Sailors stationed aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

The clinic's primary mission is to ensure the health of the Provost Marshal's Office's military working dogs. However,

the clinic finds time to provide check-ups for house pets during the work week.

"On clinic days, we usually average 60 to 70 pets per day," said Army Sgt. Willie B. Sifford, senior animal technician, Southern California Department of Veterinary Care. "We only see animals in the clinic on Wednesdays and Fridays."

The veterinary clinic offers a variety of services to help protect dogs and cats, according to Kim C. Dobhan, office manager/technician, Marine Corps

Community Services.

"We offer all the standard immunizations the dogs and cats need, at a low cost for the service member," said Dobhan.

Taking a pet to a civilian veterinarian can cost up to \$30 just for the visit. If a pet needs immunizations, costs can increase greatly, because civilian vets expect to make some profit. Immunization prices at the Station's clinic only cover the cost of the immunization. There is no mark-up, because the clinic doesn't have to make any profit.

"We also have retail sales," said Dobhan. "We sell a lot of flea control products, dental care products and vitamins at low-cost to the military member. Our prices aren't nearly what you can expect to pay out in town."

Pet ownership is vital to some families' morale and welfare, and the vet clinic helps with that need.

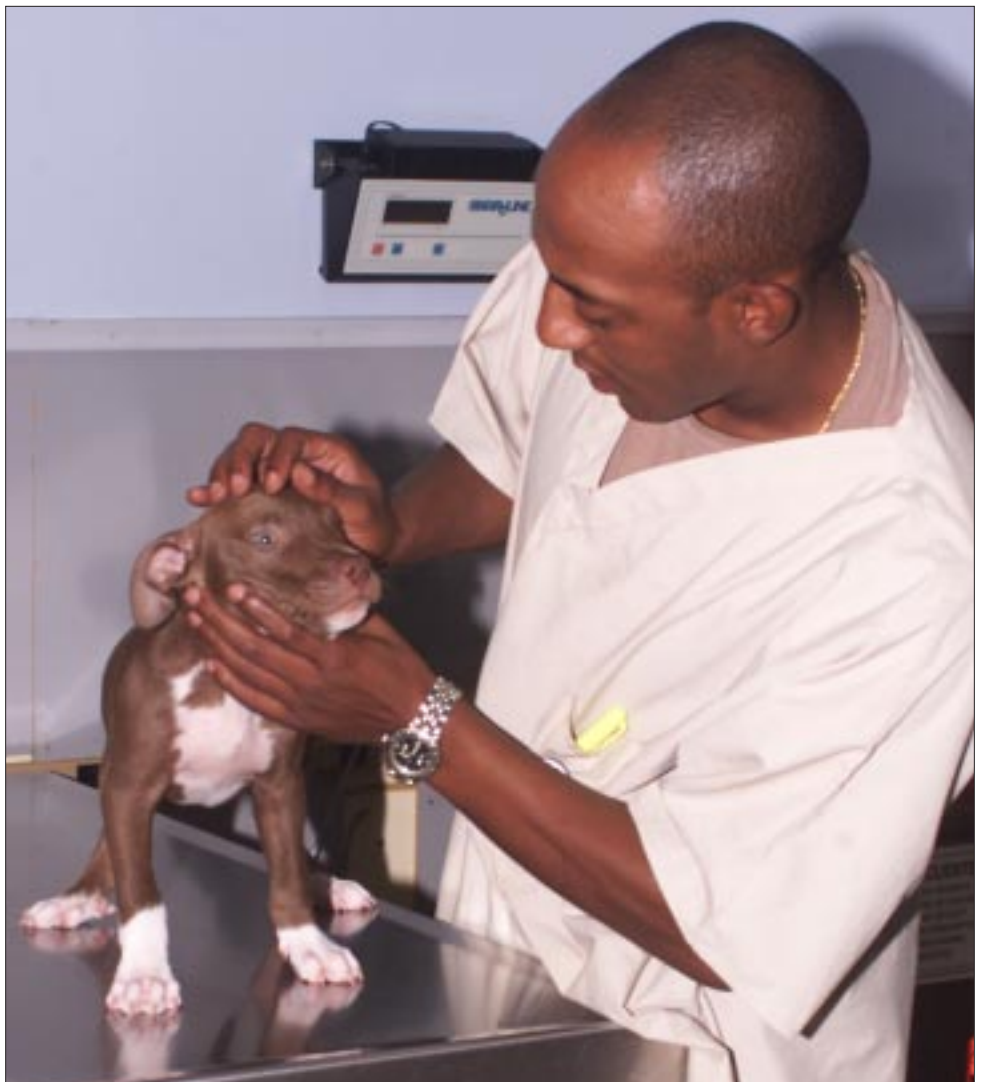
"Most pets become part of the family – a dependant. Nobody wants to leave a pet behind or lose a pet if they don't have to," said Sifford. "If we provide health services on military bases the families know their pets are safe."

The clinic also helps service members with orders to other bases in the United States and overseas by educating them on the regulations of each duty station.

"Some place require you to quarantine your pets; others require a rabies vaccination every year instead of every three years," said Dobhan. "We can help explain those regulations to people who have orders so they don't have to leave their pets behind."

The clinic does not have facilities to house pets, nor do they offer spaying, neutering or de-clawing. The clinic staff does have information available about where those services can be provided.

For details call the clinic at 577-6552.



Army Sgt. Willie B. Sifford, senior animal technician, SDCVC, checks Duke's eyes. Photo by Cpl. Mark P. Ledesma

Ad Space





## High-altitude chamber equips flight status personnel with important tools

Sixteen high-altitude training students prepare to experience hypoxia by breathing 100 percent oxygen before being depressurized to a simulated 25,000-foot altitude in the aviation survival training center aboard Miramar. The chamber trains approximately 7,000 students a year. Photo by Sgt. Mike Camacho

By Sgt. Mike Camacho

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

Flying at high altitudes exposes pilots and aircrews to many menacing threats. Hypoxia, decompression sickness and rapid decompression are constant dangers while flying. Fortunately, training in a high altitude-training chamber can help pilots and aircrews understand these dangers and give them the tools needed to defeat them.

"The human body wasn't made to fly," said Lt.j.g. Ron Schoonover, aerospace physiologist. "It's our mission here at the naval aviation training center to train the pilots and aircrews how to deal with physiological hazards and prepare them to properly employ aviation life support systems and survival procedures."

The mission of the altitude chamber at the Aviation Survival Training Center is to familiarize Navy and Marine pilots and aircrew on the symptoms of hypoxia. By decompressing the chamber to a simulated 25,000 feet altitude level, pilots and aircrews will experience hypoxia.

Hypoxia is a deficiency of oxygen reaching body tissues. So, when a pilot is flying in a multi-million dollar aircraft it is imperative the pilot or aircrew is able to recognize the symptoms and immediately treat themselves accordingly.

An individual's reaction to hypoxia can vary widely. Typically, however, symptoms such as tingling, numbness, loss of color vision, agitation, sluggishness, unconsciousness, forgetfulness, inability to respond to emergency situations and the misinterpretation of instructions and or instruments are the most commonly reported.

The Navy and Marine Corps require mandatory altitude exposure training for any pilot or aircrew member who flies

higher than 10,000 feet. As the time of useful consciousness and effective performance time varies depending on the level of altitude exposure and physical exertion, it is imperative pilots and aircrews are aware of the time factors of hypoxic effects on performance.

At 18,000 feet, an individual has about 20 to 30 minutes before the hypoxic symptoms become dangerous. At 25,000, the individual only has about two to three minutes, a considerably less amount of time.

Going up another 5,000 feet will give someone only one to two minutes of useful conscious time. At 35,000 feet, the time is dropped to 30 seconds to one minute, and at 40,000 a person would only have a mere 15 to 20 seconds to react.

According to Schoonover, hypoxia affects everyone differently. The only assured way to determine how an individual will react under hypoxic conditions is to go through the actual experience.

The chamber here was built in 1966 and has been used by the Navy and Marine Corps to keep pilots and aircrews current in high altitude survival skills training. The chamber was used by Navy Fighter Weapons School when Miramar was a naval air station and is now used by all area flight status personnel. This includes, but is not limited to, all crewmembers and pilots from NAS North Island, and Marine Corps Air Stations Miramar, Yuma and Pendleton.

The training is required for jet and fixed wing aircraft pilots and crew as a refresher course every four years. Helicopter pilots and crewmembers are not required to have this training. Quite often civilians from the local sheriffs and fire departments use the chamber as well.

Any time a pilot or crewmember changes an airframe platform, they need to

re-qualify on the new platform's requirements.

According to Schoonover, about 7,000 pilots and crewmembers from the local

area are trained here a year. He added, it's an important training tool for the Navy and Marine Corps, and a pilot can't fly without the training.



Two Naval aviators put their oxygen masks on after experiencing symptoms of hypoxia. Treating hypoxia is equally as important as recognizing the symptoms and the altitude chamber allows aviators to experience both. Photo by Sgt. Mike Camacho

Ad Space



# Motivated Staff NCO sets example for Heavy Haulers

By Sgt. Mike Camacho

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

Any time that there is a military aircraft in the sky, there are men and women who work countless hours to ensure these multi-million dollar machines will fly time and time again. These maintenance experts are usually not paid very much and often come home covered in muck. It takes a Marine who is willing to sacrifice time and energy to get the job done.

"I perform daily maintenance on aircraft and also inspect any finished maintenance to ensure it's quality work," simply said Staff Sgt. Charles P. Cartwright III.

Cartwright is a flight line mechanic, crew chief and quality assurance representative for Heavy Marine Helicopter Squadron 462. The 27-year-old has worked on HMH-462's CH-53E Super Stallions for about six and a half years out of his eight-year career in the Marine Corps. This is the only aircraft he has been assigned to work for.

The Fullerton native knows CH-53E aircraft. Cartwright has become a duty expert on the helicopters. Flight line mechanics usually attend school for about three or four months. According to Cartwright, most knowledge of the aircraft is learned through on-the-job training.

The 5-foot-6-inch, 145-pound man isn't a large person to look at. However, according to Cpl. Hugh G. Benn, flight line collateral duty inspector, all of the Marines under Cartwright look up to him for direction and knowledge.

"There isn't a question about flight line maintenance that he can't answer or quickly find an answer to," said Benn. "He's extremely motivated to teach and it's obvious that he takes enjoyment from seeing us learn and become more proficient in this job."

Staff Sgt. Warren M. Scovell, flight line chief, says Cartwright is an excellent teacher, but an even better troubleshooter.

"He's a great guy to have on the team," said Scovell. "Cartwright's teaching skills are priceless and he's one of the best troubleshooters in the squadron. We have things pop up left and right, and he keeps us on schedule."

As well as playing an important role in the mission of



**Staff Sgt. Charles P. Cartwright III has served with HMH-462 for six and a half years. His knowledge of CH-53E helicopters is extensive and because of his experience, he's the flight line go-to man. Photo by Sgt. Mike Camacho**

the Heavy Haulers squadron, he also is a dedicated father.

"I've been here for about three years and through getting to know Cartwright, I've learned that his son is the most important thing to him," said Scovell. "I have children of my own, so I understand. He always has his son in the front of his mind."

"That's one of the things about Staff Sergeant, you know that you can talk to him about anything, and he'll do everything he can to help," said Benn. "Even simple things he does, like after a hard week at work, he'll throw a

barbecue at his home for us, just to show his appreciation."

Cartwright says it's all about being a "grease monkey". He says the only way to make his Marines proficient and keep them motivated is to treat them like men before anything and teach them everything he knows.

"I love being a grease monkey," said Cartwright. "It's great to see a downed helicopter, fix it, then watch it fly. You really feel a sense of satisfaction in your work. Now, it's all about showing these younger guys how to do it."

## Greyhawks sergeant acts as role model for squadron

By Sgt. W.A. Napper Jr.

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

He sits in his small office space typing away on a laptop computer. Brown eyes stare intently at the screen, his full attention on the words typed out in front of him. Behind him, a large poster of Lt. Gen. Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller watches over him and appears to give him guidance to do the right thing for his fellow Marines and the Corps.

On another wall in the Greyhawk

Marine's office, several issues of "Leatherneck" and "Marines Magazine" hang covered and aligned. A history of Archibald Henderson, the 5th Commandant of the Marine Corps, hangs to the right of the magazines. Under a tiny desk holding Marine Corps career pamphlets sits a sea bag filled with 782 gear. This Marine is ready to go at a moment's notice.

This isn't the office of a staff sergeant, or a gunnery sergeant who's been around the Corps a while. It's not even the office

of a second lieutenant fresh out of Officer Candidate School. This is the office of Sgt. Juan P. Plancarte, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161's career planner.

Plancarte's career began August 1992, when he was a member of Riverside's Delayed Enlisted Program. September 22 of the same year, Plancarte arrived at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego. Like most people however, Plancarte's story began years before that.

Born in Mexico City in 1974, Plancarte immigrated to the United States at the age of 17 and settled in Riverside. After dealing with problems at home with his family and out on the streets with local gangs, Plancarte saw a way he could improve his life – he could join the Marine Corps. Figuring he had nothing to lose, Plancarte quickly sought out the nearest recruiter.

"My grandfather was a Mexican Marine, and my mother always wanted a member of the family in the service, so I thought I should also become a Marine," he said. "The thing that drives me is my background. I never had three meals a day. I had to take care of myself, and out there the possibility of survival is limited."

Although his Military Occupational Specialty doesn't promote well, Plancarte isn't bitter. Instead, he looks forward to each day he can wake up and put on his crisp uniform.

"This doesn't compare to where I was," he said. "Most of my friends are dead or

in jail. I'm alive and working – I can't go wrong here."

Following recruit training and Marine Combat Training, Plancarte attended the Basic Administration School for two months at Camp Pendleton. He was in one of the last classes before the school moved to Camp Johnson, N.C. Graduation, in 1993, launched him to Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms with 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Division. Two years later he had a Permanent Change of Station to Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan, with Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 1. While with MWHS-1, he was the squadron's Marine of the Quarter during 1996.

After 14 quick months, Plancarte transferred again, this time to MCAS El Toro, to serve with MWHS-3.

Like with MWHS-1, he found himself MWHS-3's Marine of the Quarter for the fourth quarter of 1997. During his three years there, Plancarte attended the Career Planner's School at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., before transferring to HMM-161.

"I really enjoy interaction with Marines," he said. "I wanted to be able to make a difference in an individual Marine's life."

Plancarte said he values his fellow Marines opinion of him, and works hard to earn their trust. He personally admires

Ad Space



# MALS-16 Forerunners bust MACS-1 Black Jacks 19-7

By Cpl. Kristopher S. Haloj

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16 Forerunners defeated the Marine Air Control Squadron 1 Black Jacks 19-7, in an intramural flag football game at Mills Park Thursday.

Right from the kickoff, the Forerunners let the Black Jacks know they meant business. On their first drive in four short plays, the Forerunners burned down the field and into the end zone. Then it was time for the Black Jacks' offense to show what they could do. Seemingly unfazed by the Forerunners' early touchdown, the Black Jacks' offense took to the field and proved they aimed to win, by scoring after a

series of strong pass plays.

On their second possession in the game, the Forerunners again burned through the strong Black Jacks defense in just five plays and scored again. The tremendous speed and quickness of the Forerunners offense, lead by running back Derrick Sanders, seemed unstoppable.

Late in the first half, in an attempt to even the score before the end of the half, the Black Jacks went deep on the sideline, but Forerunners John Barton picked it off. The Forerunners with possession went for the quick pass up the middle, but a bad throw by quarterback Michael Davis landed the ball in the arms of Black Jack Jeff Yarborough. The Black Jacks then tried to make a profit, but failed, leaving the score 12-7 going into the second.

Throughout the second half, both teams just pounded each other with each defense holding the other's offense from capitalizing on difficult drives.

With minutes left in the game the Forerunners' Davis managed to barrel through the Black Jack defense for a final touchdown.

According to Barton, a big key to their victory was the game performance of their quarterback, Davis, who is usually their back-up, was called to action because their starter was unable to play.

"Our quarterback



**Derrick Sanders, Forerunners running back, gets stopped by Black Jacks Christopher Tucker on a strong drive to the end zone. Sanders was a vital weapon in the Forerunners offense with his overwhelming quickness and agility.** Photo by Cpl. Kristopher S. Haloj

stepped-up by playing a bigger role for the team," said Barton.

This battle, the only way to describe the way these two teams went at each other, came to a close, 19-7, Forerunners.

Spectators are welcome at all of the intramural flag football games, for teams schedules call 577-1202.



**Forerunners safety John Barton puts the heat on Black Jacks running back Raymond Mitchell during an intramural flag football game Thursday.** Photo by Cpl. Kristopher S. Haloj

## MCCS Semper Fit brings innovative fitness program to Miramar gym

By Sgt. Carolyn S. Sittig

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

Hard and soft bodies alike can benefit from Marine Corps Community Services' Microfit program. Usually the thought of going through any kind of fitness program is anything, but inspiring. It brings to mind something Marines are required to do or some type of mandatory training. There are high hopes from MCCS that they can change that opinion through the Microfit physical fitness assessment program.

"Microfit is geared toward physical fitness and improving a person's overall quality of fitness," said Lisa Griswold, MCCS fitness specialist. "Microfit tests five different areas of fitness: blood pressure and resting heart rate, body fat, aerobic endurance, flexibility and strength."

This program is a physical fitness assessment available to service members, retirees, reservists, Department of Defense employees and family members.

"Microfit lasts approximately 45 minutes, but the benefits can be life-changing," said Griswold. "Microfit will show what areas of fitness a person may be deficient in – areas they may not know he or she had to work on."

Aside from determining weak areas, the program can also be used to measure the progress of a new or current work out routine. The system interprets data and shows how well a person rated in each of the five areas and it gives an overall fitness score. These scores provide a base line of a person's physical fitness, according to Griswold. "It gives the basic recommendation to either

maintain or improve in each area." This is especially useful for someone who is starting a new fitness regiment. After the initial test people can have another test done in 6 to 8 weeks to monitor progress and allow them to see what areas they need to improve.

Griswold said that typically the area most people score low in is flexibility. "People don't understand the importance of flexibility. Flexibility is one of the basics to staying injury-free. If you're tight or inflexible, you're increasing your chances of getting injured."

There are also gender-specific areas people score low in. "A lot of males generally underestimate the value of cardiovascular exercise because they want to be big. It is important to do cardiovascular exercise because the heart and lungs are needed for everyday operations. Not exercising the cardiovascular system means the heart and lungs aren't becoming more efficient, so they have to work harder because they aren't as conditioned.

"Women, on the other hand, don't focus on strength training and want to stay thin," she added. "Weight training helps to maintain and increase bone density and it also reduces the risk of osteoporosis," said Griswold.

Griswold said with this assessment a fitness specialist can use a person's current activity level and other factors combined with what the scores were in each area to customize a person's work out routine. This customized work out is also based on the individual fitness goals. Griswold also said a fitness specialist would show people how to use the equipment and follow up to check on a person's status and adjust workout routine.

Ad Space



### Navy Birthday Ball canceled

The Commander of Navy Region Southwest regrettably announces that the 5th Annual San Diego Navy Birthday Ball scheduled for Oct. 12 has been canceled due to security issues.

For those who purchased tickets, refunds are available from the representative they were purchased from. Tickets must be returned at the time of the refund.

For details contact Petty Officer First Class Marsha Kincaid at (619) 532-4796.

### All-Enlisted Golf Tournament

Two Marine foursomes will compete against the Navy and Coast Guard for the Fleet Week Trophy Wednesday. Up to 26 additional teams from area commands will participate in a scramble format. Combined pay grades of each must be 21 or less.

The tournament will take place at the Admiral Baker Golf Course from 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Contact Chuck Smith at (619) 472-5800 or [chucksmth@aol.com](mailto:chucksmth@aol.com) to sign up.

### Get your praise on

The Miramar Station Chapel offers a service for everyone every Tuesday at 6 p.m.

For more information call Navy Lt. Miles R. Clarke at 577-9042.

### Legoland offers free passes

Legoland would like to honor the military for its heroic efforts with a free visit to the park.

This ticket offer is only available at the Legoland theme park entrance. The offer is valid to all active-duty service members with a military identification card.

Up to six family and friends may purchase discounted admission of \$20 each when accompanied by active-duty or retired military.

The offer is valid Oct. 13-21.

### Family Medical Services Seminar

Naval Medical Center San Diego invites all active-duty service members and their families to attend the Family Medical Services Seminar. The seminar will be held Oct. 18 at 10 a.m. in the auditorium located in Building 5 at the medical center.

Attendees will hear about the services available at Naval Medical Center and have

the opportunity to speak with representatives from various service groups.

For more information call Debra Joseph at (619) 532-5852.

### This week in the downtown USO

Tonight – Free open pool all night.

Saturday – Movie night. You pick the movie and they will play it.

Sunday – Coffee and pastries starting at 11:30 a.m.

Monday – Columbus Day. All government facilities are closed, but the USO will be open.

Tuesday – Enjoy a fantastic evening of soul food and beautiful singing.

Thursday – Free popcorn for all USO guests starting at 5:45 p.m.

### Put me in coach

Marine Youth Sports needs a few more soccer players in the PeeWee Division (ages 4-5) and the divisions for ages 8 through 14 to round out an even four teams per division.

If you thought it was too late for registration, you're in luck. Stop by the Youth Center and sign up.

Practices are held either at either 5 or 6 p.m. twice a week on lighted fields. All games and practices are held on Miramar.

For more information call Ron Hymas at 577-4136.

### Get your blues and brass ready

The Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area/3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Marine Corps Birthday Balls are scheduled for Nov. 9 for officers and staff noncommissioned officers and Nov. 11 for sergeants and below. Both celebrations will be held at the U.S. Grant Hotel in downtown San Diego.

Tickets will cost approximately \$56 per person for officers and staff NCOs and approximately \$43 per person for sergeants and below. Tickets go on sale Monday at the 3rd MAW headquarters building and the Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area headquarters building.

The 3rd MAW will sell tickets Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays while MCABWA will sell tickets Tuesdays and Thursdays.

For details about these balls log onto the ball Web site at [www.miramar.usmc.mil/MC%20Ball/mcball01.htm](http://www.miramar.usmc.mil/MC%20Ball/mcball01.htm).

### TRICARE Senior Prime to end

Over the last several years, TRICARE Senior Prime was one of several test programs used by Department of Defense to evaluate its ability to provide health care services to its over-age-65 beneficiaries.

With direction from the Fiscal Year 2001 National Defense Authorization Act, the Department of Defense will implement TRICARE for Life to meet this need. Consequently, the TRICARE Senior Prime program will end Dec. 31.

### What's available at the TRICARE Service Center?

TRICARE Service Centers provide information about the TRICARE program and the health care options available under TRICARE. They can also provide a list of network providers for future appointments.

These service centers are staffed with health care finders who assist beneficiaries by facilitating services. Additionally, they process enrollment applications for TRICARE Prime and issue enrollment identification cards.

For details call 1-800-242-6788 or visit your local TRICARE Service Center.

## Free movies from MCCs

#### Today

**Rush Hour 2** (PG-13) 4:30 p.m.  
**American Pie 2** (R) 6:30 p.m.  
**Original Sin** (R) 8:45 p.m.

#### Saturday

**Princess Diaries** (G) 6:30 p.m.  
**Rush Hour 2** (PG-13) 8:45 p.m.

#### Sunday

**Osmosis Jones** (PG) 1 p.m.  
**Planet of the Apes** (PG-13) 6:30 p.m.

#### Wednesday

**Captain Corelli's Mandolin** (R) 6:30 p.m.

#### Thursday

**Spy Kids** (PG) 2 p.m.  
**American Outlaws** (PG-13) 4:30 p.m.

The Station theater is equipped with a 35 mm projection system and Dolby Digital Surround Sound. All movies are free for DoD ID card holders and their guests. For movie synopses see the current theater flyer or call 577-4143.

### Trautman, continued from page 1

executive officer, and then as the commanding officer of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169. He deployed with the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade to Southwest Asia to support Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Sea Angel. In 1993, he served with the Joint Staff, Force Structure, Resources and Assessment Directorate.

September 1997 found him serving as Marine Aircraft Group 36's commanding officer. During this assignment, he also served as the Marine Forces Air Combat Element commander during Operation Cobra Gold in Thailand, and Exercise Beachcrest in Japan. In 1999 he also served as the branch head for Aviation Weapon Systems Requirements Branch, Department of Aviation at Headquarters Marine Corps until July 2000.

### OAG, continued from page 1

equipment, facilities, training, safety and standardization. The groups consist of personnel from each functional area of the Group, and generate OAG action items and present them to their respective working committee.

"The main issues tackled answer the question 'where do we want the Marine

Brigadier Gen. Trautman received a master of science degree in systems management from the University of Southern California, and a master of arts degree in International relations from Salve Regina University. He also earned a master of arts degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College.

Brigadier General Trautman's personal decorations include the Legion of Merit, gold star in lieu of second award, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, gold star in lieu of fourth award, the Strike/Flight Air Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal and the combat action ribbon.

"I am absolutely humbled and honored to join your ranks," he said during the ceremony. "A ceremony like this is very humbling. There may be tough times ahead for us, but I can assure you, the Marine Corps is ready."

Corps to fight for money for our community," said Bywaters. "Part of what we discuss is smoothing out issues such as old gear and increasing maintenance."

The OAG was established in 1996 by the deputy chief of staff for aviation to resolve standardization issues to the Tactical Air Command Center.

The Group meets biannually, or as required to facilitate timely input for the program review process.

## Volunteer opportunities

◆ The Wetland Avengers, an Aquatic Adventures Science Education Foundation project, is seeking military volunteers to help restore the wetland habitats of San Diego County.

For more information contact Melissa Studer at 274-0724.

◆ If you are looking for volunteer opportunities, the United Service Organizations would love to have you help. Opportunites are open for day-time help all days of the week.

Please contact Jennifer Stander at (619) 235-6503 for more information.

◆ AIDS Walk San Diego needs volunteers Sunday to help set up, man the booths, provide security and register other volunteers.

The AIDS Walk raises money for HIV and AIDS awareness programs, research, and screenings.

For more information contact Marcella Martin at (619) 260-1068.

◆ Help beautify the San Diego community by planting trees. Most plantings take place Saturday mornings. The project goes until Oct. 27.

For more information contact Patrick Stevenson at (619) 697-0151.

◆ The BEST Mentor Program is look-

ing for mentors to help troubled children in the San Diego area. The program needs volunteers who have at least one day a week to spend 2-3 hours with a child.

The time should be spent doing positive, meaningful activities that will instill a sense of value in the child.

For more information call Calvin Clayton at (619) 297-8111.

◆ Do you have an interest in military aviation history? The Flying Leatherneck Museum is looking for volunteer docents and gift shop attendants.

The museum has aircraft from World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and Persian Gulf War. The museum is located on Station and is open to the public.

Call the Flying Leatherneck Historical Foundation at 693-1723 for details.

◆ The PARTNERS mentor program is seeking volunteers for at-risk youth ages 10-17. Call Venesa at (619) 584-5797.

◆ City of Hope needs volunteers for its 2001 Walk For Hope Against Breast Cancer Oct. 14 at 5:30 a.m. Volunteers are needed to set up, direct traffic, man booths and other activities.

For more information, call (619) 544-1913.



Join the Armed Services YMCA for a military appreciation night full of fun and discounts starting at 4 p.m. Oct. 19.

The first 250 military participants will receive an event pass and a T-shirt voucher.

Visit the event headquarters at Jimmy Love's to get your Operation Gaslamp brochure, map, discounts, T-shirt and enter the drawing.

Tickets are on sale now and the night of the event. For ticket or event information please call Cindy at San Diego Armed Services YMCA at (619) 232-9084 or visit the organization's Web site at [www.asymcasd.org](http://www.asymcasd.org).



Greyhawk,  
continued from page 8

Chesty Puller for how he ensured troop welfare was achieved.

“He was a person who cared for his Marines’ welfare,” he said. “He was respected for it. He’s someone I look up to – the leadership and camaraderie he had.”

Sergeant Maj. R.J. Hawley, HMM-161 sergeant major, said if he had to pick only one Marine to take on a deployment, he would choose Plancarte.

“He’s an outstanding Marine,” Hawley said. “He has good judgment, initiative – all the qualities you want your staff NCOs to have. He’s everything you like.”

Plancarte desires to one day soon obtain a commission into the Marine Corps officer ranks. He has already done a lot of the legwork to obtain this goal.

“He attends National University,” Hawley said. “For somebody to try going to school in a helicopter squadron, that’s tough. I think he’ll be a great candidate and if he gets selected he’ll fit right in.”

Plancarte earns his bachelor’s degree in December and will then qualify for the Enlisted Commissioning Program. He then plans to submit his paperwork next

year for the program.

“One of my goals is to become an officer,” Plancarte said. “I think I have good leadership skills and I think I’ll make a good officer.”

Hawley explained that quite often Plancarte goes above and beyond the call of duty in everything he does. Aside from helping a diminutive administration shop – run by only three Marines – Plancarte often leads by example. For his first five years in the Corps, Plancarte scored a 300 on his Physical Fitness Test. Since then he has scored consistently in high 280s and 290s.

“He’s proficient in everything he does,” Hawley said. “His PFT, rifle score, everything he does is above and beyond expectations.”

Hawley also said that Plancarte has one difficult trait of a leader already nearly perfected – the trait of tasking and supervising.

“He has it down,” Hawley said. “He makes sure they understand what to do, and if they can’t get it right, Plancarte sits them down and explains it again. He doesn’t miss a beat.”

When he’s not at the squadron, Plancarte is in the local community

helping those who can’t help themselves. He volunteered his time for a year with the Partners Mentorship Program. Now he assists the elderly at a nursing home in Escondido.

“It’s just basic things like getting groceries or taking them to the store,” he said. “My mom always told me to help the elderly. It was engraved in my head to help the people who need help.”

Plancarte also practices Tae Kwon Do, Kung Fu and gymnastics in his spare time – something he began while he lived in Mexico City. Plancarte and his wife, Olga, have two sons – Jonah, 6, and Jovan, 5.

Although Hawley is proud to see Plancarte promoted to the next rank, he says he will be sad when the level-headed Marine moves to a duty station away from the Greyhawks.

“It’s certainly been a pleasure to serve with him,” Hawley said. “I’m afraid when he gets promoted he’ll leave us, but that’s the nature of the Marine Corps.”

Plancarte offers every Marine who sees him this piece of advice about the Corps:

“A Marine should always be ready,” he said. “Explore your potential. If you give your best to the Marine Corps, you’ll get recognized and respected.”

Flight Jacket

Maj. Gen. William G. Bowdon Maj. Gen. Charles F. Bolden Jr.

Commander, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area Commanding General, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

Maj. T.V. Johnson Public Affairs Officer

Capt. Rebecca Goodrich-Hinton Deputy PAO

2nd Lt. John E. Niemann Managing Editor

Staff Sgt. Micheal Mink Information Chief

Sgt. A.C. Strong Press Chief

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Combat Correspondents

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